

# MASTER PLAN PROCESS

In August of 2002, the City of Tucson contracted with the Tucson Arts District Partnership, Inc. to produce a Public Participation Plan and a Master Plan for the Tucson Historic Warehouse Arts District. The plans were to focus on the Toole Avenue portion of the District between Stone Avenue and 6th Avenue. Vera Uyehara, Executive Director of the Tucson Arts District Partnership, engaged Rameen Ahmed as the project Planning Coordinator and a team of planning consultants consisting of Poster Frost Associates (Architects and Planners) and Wheat Scharf Associates (Landscape Architects). Phase I, an extensive Public Participation process directed by Ms. Ahmed, gave the full range of community stakeholders the opportunity to provide detailed input to the planning process. Phase I of the Plan was completed on June 30, 2003 and is summarized in three volumes. The Public Participation process was conducted through two separate but complementary processes: 1) interaction with the public through Public Participation interviews, focus groups, public presentations/workshops and interest forms; 2) gathering information regarding the existing land use, zoning, ownership, and infrastructure conditions of the District

In Phase I, there were more than fifty personal interviews, four focus group meetings, two public meetings, and three meetings of the Tucson Arts District Partnership's Warehouse Committee. This information was distilled into a preliminary analysis of problems and opportunities, consisting of ten points:

- The need for an incubation and production area for artists
- The need for an official designation and definition of a Downtown Arts District
- The need to create an organization of the existing community of the area, particularly of the artists
- The need to develop mixed use arts-related space that avoids gentrification and dislocation, is sustainable, and encourages accelerated revitalization
- The need to develop an artist-based investment plan
- The need for an outdoor public performance, events and open space
- The need for development of pedestrian connections and hardscape design to foster a sense of District identity
- The need to recognize the importance of parking and transportation issues
- The need to resolve environmental issues and hazards that can hinder the promotion of future District development
- The need to address noise, street blockage, and the other impacts of train traffic on the District

Underscoring all of the identified problems and opportunities was the fundamental concern relating to: 1) maintaining the rents at their affordable levels; 2) providing longer-term rental agreements; 3) creating a mechanism for valuing the "sweat-equity" investments made by current tenants

Phase II, this Master Plan, grew directly out of the input and recommendations identified in the Public Participation Plan. This process was organized around three public meetings and a series of small stakeholder meetings to flesh out specific details of the Plan. Approximately 80 people attended each of the public meetings. The first public meeting was held on November 18, 2003 with the following agenda: Introductions; Project Overview; Recommendations from *Public Participation Plan*, Proposed Master Plan process, District facts and economics, Case studies of successful arts district plans (Providence, Jersey City, and Minneapolis), and How do we find a solution?. The second public meeting was held on January 15, 2004 with the following agenda: Alternatives and Concepts; Land Use Mix; Open Space; Transportation; Organizational Structure; Draft Conclusions and Recommendations. Finally, on February 24, 2004, the third and final public meeting proposed the following draft plan elements: Master Plan Guiding Principles, Master Plan Goals, and 8 Major Draft Recommendations. The PowerPoint presentations from three public meetings are included on CD within this Master Plan.